

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): A spinnerette assembly for forming one or more hollow fibers comprising:

a unitary spinnerette body;

at least one extrusion orifice formed in said unitary spinnerette body;

a hollow needle being affixed in a needle mounting hole formed in said unitary spinnerette body and wherein said needle mounting hole receives a portion of said hollow needle;

a hollow needle extending through each said at least one extrusion orifice in a concentric manner to define at least one annular passage around said needle in said at least one extrusion orifice;

a bore forming fluid passage formed in said unitary spinnerette body, said bore forming fluid passage communicating with the interior of each said hollow needle;

at least one fiber-forming material passage formed in said unitary spinnerette assembly body, wherein each said at least one fiber-forming material passage comprises a fiber-forming material inlet port extending from a surface of said assembly body to an interior of said assembly body and at least one transverse passage extending from said fiber-forming material port to each said annular passage;

and a bottom plate.

Claim 2 (original): A spinnerette assembly as recited in Claim 1, wherein said transverse passage is a backcut portion of said fiber-forming material passage that entirely surrounds said needle in a continuous manner and is in communication with said extrusion orifice.

Claim 3 (original): A spinnerette assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein each said fiber-forming material port extends substantially parallel to said extrusion orifice and said transverse passage extends substantially perpendicular to said fiber-forming material port.

Claim 4 (canceled):

Claim 5 (canceled)

Claim 6 (currently amended): A spinnerette assembly as recited in claim 3 ~~claim 4~~ wherein each said needle mounting hole is in communication with said bore forming fluid inlet port at a surface of said unitary spinnerette body via said bore forming fluid passage.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A spinnerette assembly as recited in claim 6, wherein said bore forming fluid passage comprises a first bore forming fluid conduit coaxial with said needle and in communication with said needle and a second bore forming fluid conduit that extends at an angle with respect to said first bore forming fluid conduit from said bore forming fluid conduit to a surface of said unitary spinnerette body.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A spinnerette assembly as recited in claim 3 ~~claim 4~~, wherein said extrusion orifice extends through portions of said unitary spinnerette body and said bottom plate.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A spinnerette assembly as recited in claim 3 ~~claim 4~~, wherein said fiber forming material passage is formed in said unitary spinnerette body.

Claim 10 (cancelled)

Claim 11 (previously withdrawn): A method for forming a composite hollow fiber comprising the steps of:

- delivering a fiber-forming material to each annular passage in a spinnerette assembly,
- said fiber-forming material entering said spinnerette assembly through one or more fiber-forming material inlet ports and passing through the interior of said assembly to a transverse passage, a portion of said transverse passage entirely surrounding each needle in a continuous manner and through an annular passage in communication with an extrusion orifice; and
- extruding the fiber-forming material through the extrusion orifice and around each said needle and injecting a bore forming fluid into each needle to thereby provide a fiber comprising a bore forming fluid situated in the center of said fiber-forming material as it exits the spinnerette assembly through the extrusion orifice; optionally passing the nascent extruded hollow fiber through an air gap; and
- solidifying the hollow fiber by cooling, solvent evaporation, or solvent extraction.